

around the same time and by the same mint, with contrasting legends. Though it might be tempting to hypothesize some Lydian animal name 'KALI' for the possibly wilder beast on the two recent hektes, these letters are in fact consistent with the standard legend on Lydian seals, ending in -L- and the suffix -IM, from the Lydian verb 'to be'.<sup>50</sup> (Thus for example, 'MANELIM' = '(I) am of Manes'.) Just so, though Gusmani was unaware of the Oxford hekete published by Kraay, he nonetheless restored the legend on the earlier coin RKALI(M).<sup>51</sup> The iota and traces consistent with M are visible on the Oxford coin, and the ending -κας is not uncommon among western Anatolian proper names.<sup>52</sup> Gusmani cites no instance of the name 'Rkas', and none is known. The identity of the initial letter must remain uncertain. Therefore, I suggest that the legend be restored KALIM and translated '(I) am of 'kas'. The analogy with seals may at first sight seem difficult, since a seal at least sometimes designates ownership<sup>53</sup> but cannot on circulating currency. However, it is not difficult to imagine that these seals served to indicate the original owner, and hence the source, of the bullion in question, and an explicit parallel exists for the use of seals on early electrum coinage: ΦΑΝΕΙΟΣ ΕΜΙΧΜΑ, on the coinage possibly of Ephesos.<sup>54</sup>

In the light of this reconstruction, WALWEL (if we accept a final L) might be shortened form of \*WALWELIM: '(I) am of the lion' (\*walwēs). It can sometimes happen on Lydian seals that the -IM suffix is omitted, at least when the noun is joined with a following substantive (it is not here).<sup>55</sup> Or, as in the case of the missing lion heads, the restricted size of coin flans may have led to the omission of this suffix. This reading has the merit of corresponding with the KALIM reading as it has been reconstructed. The identity of the 'lion' is unclear. Since that beast was probably the royal symbol of Lydia, WALWEL might well refer to the king himself. Identification with lions by Eastern royalty was apparently common; Herodotos reports (i 84) that the Lydian king Meles actually sired a lion.<sup>56</sup> It is also possible that the lion refers in some way to the king's realm. So for example, lion statues stood in front of the royal mint at Sardis;<sup>57</sup> it is conceivable that the reference is to them,

even if we cannot specify how. On this interpretation, the lion head symbolizes what the legend makes explicit, that these were coins of the king.

Alternatively, WALWEL might be the Lydian dative or locative singular (this form ends in -L) of a noun such as \*walwēs:<sup>58</sup> 'at the lion [mint?]', or variously 'to', 'for' or 'of the lion [king? mint?]', it might reflect a shortened form of an agent suffix cognate with Hittite -alla (cf. LÜMEŠ walwalla, p. 205 above): 'by the lion [king? mint?]', finally, WALWEL or WALWET might be a shortened form simply of the Lydian word for 'lion', in the nominative case. The legend would thus make explicit the coin type; and as the lion was probably the royal symbol of Lydia, so these coins were identified as the royal issue.

Finally, the question has been raised why only one Lydian king issued coins marked with a legend. The discovery of the two KALIM coins, in addition to those marked WALWEL(-ET?), may supply at least part of the answer to this. Clearly a distinction is being established between two roughly simultaneous issues of one mint. One may speculate as to why this was done: whether, for example, the king allowed an important subordinate to have coins marked with his own name and, not to be outdone, therefore marked his own coins with a royal legend. Whatever the reason, once the KALIM issue was complete, WALWEL(-ET?) was no longer needed on Lydian royal coins.

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<sup>58</sup> On this case ending, see Gusmani (n. 15) 43. It should be noted that Gusmani does not cite this as a possible interpretation of 'valvel'.

### The Scythian ultimatum (Herodotus iv 131, 132)

Shortly before Darius abandoned his futile pursuit of the elusive Scythians, there came to the Persians a messenger from the Scythian chiefs (iv 131, 132):

πολλάκις δὲ τοιοῦτον γινομένου τέλος Δαρείος τε ἐν ἀπορίῃσι εἶχετο καὶ οἱ Σκυθῶν βασιλεῖς μαθόντες τοῦτο ἔπεμπον κήρυκα δῶρα Δαρείῳ φέροντα ὀρνιθά τε καὶ μῦν καὶ βάτραχον καὶ οἰστοὺς πέντε. Πέρσαι δὲ τὸν φέροντα τὰ δῶρα ἐπειρώτεον τὸν νόον τῶν διδομένων· ὁ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔφη οἱ ἐπεστάλθαι ἄλλο ἢ δόντα τὴν ταχίστην ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι· αὐτοὺς δὲ τοὺς Πέρσας ἐκέλευε, εἰ σοφοὶ εἴσι, γινῶναι τὸ θέλει τὰ δῶρα λέγειν. ταῦτα ἀκούσαντες οἱ Πέρσαι ἐβουλεύοντο. Δαρείου μὲν νυν ἡ γνώμη ἦν Σκύθας ἐωυτῷ διδόναι σφέας τε αὐτοὺς καὶ γῆν τε καὶ ὕδωρ, εἰκάζων τῇδε, ὥς μὺς μὲν ἐν γῇ γίνεται καρπὸν τὸν αὐτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ σιτεύμενος, βάτραχος δὲ ἐν ὕδατι, ὄρνις δὲ μάλιστα οἴκε ἵππῳ, τοὺς δὲ οἰστοὺς ὥς τὴν ἐωυτῶν ἀλκὴν παραδιδούσι. αὕτη μὲν Δαρείῳ ἀπεδέδεκτο ἡ γνώμη, συνεστήκει δὲ ταῦτα τῇ γνώμῃ ἡ Γωβρύεω, τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐνὸς τῶν τὸν μάγον κατελόντων, εἰκάζοντος τὰ δῶρα λέγειν· 'Ἦν μὴ ὀρνιθες γενόμενοι ἀναπτῆσθε ἐς τὸν οὐρανόν, ὧ Πέρσαι, ἡ μὺς γενόμενοι κατὰ τῆς γῆς καταδύητε, ἡ βάτραχοι γενόμενοι ἐς τὰς λίμνας ἐσπηδήσητε, οὐκ ἀπονοστήσετε ὀπίσω ὑπὸ τῶνδε τῶν τοξευμάτων βαλλόμενοι.

<sup>50</sup> Gusmani, *Kadmos* xi (1972) 47–51 and (n. 18) 58 s.v. '-im', cf. *Die Sprache* xvii (1971) 1–6.

<sup>51</sup> Gusmani (n. 18) 86.

<sup>52</sup> See L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen* (Prague 1964) 662.

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., M. Balmuth, *Studies presented to George M. A. Hanfmann*, edd. D. G. Mitten et al. (Cambridge, Mass. and Mainz 1971) 5–6 and reff.

<sup>54</sup> See P. R. Franke and R. Schmitt, ΦΑΝΕΟΣ-ΦΑΝΟΣ ΕΜΙ ΣΗΜΑ, *Chiron* iv (1974) 1–4. for the attribution to Ephesos, see Weidauer 68 (now widely accepted). Kraay *ACGC* 23 had made a case for Halikarnassos.

<sup>55</sup> See Gusmani, *Kadmos* xi (1972) 49, 51.

<sup>56</sup> On the (possible) identification with lions by Assyrian kings, see E. D. Van Buren, *Anal. Orient.* xviii (Rome 1939) 6; R. Koldewey, *Die Königsburgen von Babylon* (1931–2, repr. Osnabrück 1969) i pp. 7, 9, 20–1, ii pp. 5, 9 (*N.B.*: Nebuchadnezzar stamped clay bricks used for his buildings with lion-seals); E. Porada, *BullMFA* xlviii (1950) 2–8; and cf. H. Frankfort, *The art and architecture of the ancient Orient* (Harmondsworth 1958) 104 fig. 41. (Assurnasirpal's tunic). For a similar motif in Achaemenid Persia, see R. Ettinghausen, *Oriens* xvii (1964) 161–4. The appellation 'lion' is common in the *NT*: see *i Macc.* 3:4–7 for Judah as lion. For further reff., see *Sardis from prehistoric to Roman times* (n. 24) 184 and n. 6 above.

<sup>57</sup> See A. Ramage, *BASOR* cxci (1968) 11–2, *cic* (1970) 16–22; *Sardis from prehistoric to Roman times* (n. 24) 34–7.

This episode, foreshadowed in an earlier speech by Idanthyrus the Scythian prince (iv 127.4), is presented as an enacted riddle, an intelligence test which Darius fails. Displaying an optimism which we are bound to judge irrational, he takes the offering to be a gesture of submission; his interpretation, displaying as it does an unalterable reliance on traditional tactics, illustrates his obtuse inflexibility.<sup>1</sup> Gobryas, whose proven courage and loyalty to Darius (iii 78.4–5) put him beyond any suspicion of defeatism, rightly discerns a more menacing sense in the message. This curious communication powerfully enhances our feeling that Darius has entered a world where normal rules do not hold; and indeed Herodotus' whole account of Scythia suggests a way of life far more alien than that of Egypt, for all his emphasis on the antithetical quality of Egyptian culture (ii 35 ff.)

This episode is liable to misinterpretation if viewed in isolation, and it is not uncommon to find it treated as a Greek invention. But the procedure here described corresponds to practices widely attested among illiterate peoples,<sup>2</sup> and it seems clear that Herodotus here preserves an authentic detail. 'Die Nachrichten über die skythischen Völker, die uns Herodot im vierten Buch aufbewahrt hat, zählen mit zu den kostbarsten Schätzen seines Werks': thus Karl Meuli began his classic 'Scythica',<sup>3</sup> which established the conservatism of custom in the vast and ill-defined area covered by Herodotus' Scythia and the importance of modern ethnographic observation for elucidating Herodotus' text, incomprehension being no guarantee of accurate and unprejudiced reporting. *Cuius ego in vestigia* . . .

'For symbolic communications of this kind cf. *JRAS* xvii, p. 415 seq.': so How and Wells, whose assumption that this periodical would be easily accessible to every student of Herodotus nowadays seems over-sanguine. Those who pursue this reference<sup>4</sup> to a lengthy article entitled 'Beginnings of writing in and around Tibet', by Terrien de Lacouperie (Professor of Indo-Chinese Philology at University College, London) are rewarded with some interesting parallels from the Tibeto-Chinese border. Thus (419 f.): 'The Lu-tze, being unable to read or write, have arranged with the Chinese a sort of code of signals or tokens, by which important messages are carried to and fro between them. For example, a piece of chicken liver, three pieces of chicken fat, and a chili wrapped in red pepper, means "Prepare to fight at once"'.<sup>5</sup> And again (421): 'When the Li-su are minded to rebel, they send to the Mo-so chief (who rules them on behalf of the Chinese government) what the Chinese call a *Muh-k'i* and the Tibetans a *Shing-tchram*. It is a stick with knife-cut notches. Some symbols are fastened to it, such, for instance, as a feather, calcined wood, a

little fish, etc., etc. The bearer must explain the meaning of the notches and symbols. The notches may indicate the number of hundreds or thousands of soldiers who are coming; the feather shows that they arrive with the swiftness of a bird; the burnt wood, that they will set fire to everything on their way; the fish, that they will throw everybody into the water, etc., etc. This custom is largely used among all the savage tribes of the region. It is also the usual manner in which chiefs transmit their orders.'

More forthcoming than How and Wells, A. W. Lawrence notes a parallel from Mongol history.<sup>6</sup> In 1303 Prince Toktai sent to his rival Noghai as a declaration of war a hoe, an arrow, and a handful of earth, which Noghai interpreted thus: 'If you hide in the earth, I will dig you out. If you rise to the heavens, I will shoot you down. Choose a battlefield.' Sir Henry Yule, whose edition of Marco Polo Lawrence cites for this episode, not only (as we might expect) mentions the Herodotean precedent in his note on this passage,<sup>7</sup> but also adverts to a curious parallel from recent diplomatic history. In 1819 a young Russian officer, Nicolai Muraviev, was dispatched on a mission to Khiva, with the professed purpose of improving commercial relations with the khanate; among the gifts which he presented to the Khan was a salver on which were packed two loaves of sugar, ten pounds of lead, ten pounds of gunpowder, and ten musket-flints. 'The Khivans put the following interpretation on this gift: The two loaves stood, according to them, for an offer of peace and sweet friendship, whilst the ammunition signified that, if friendship were not agreed to, war would be the result.'<sup>8</sup> Here we note with interest the

<sup>6</sup> *The History of Herodotus of Halicarnassus*, the translation of G. Rawlinson, revised and annotated by A. W. Lawrence (London 1935) *ad loc.*

<sup>7</sup> 'What a singular similarity we have here to the message that reached Darius 1800 years before, . . . from Toktai's predecessors, alien from him in blood, it may be, but identical in customs and mental characteristics', *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*,<sup>3</sup> ed. Sir Henry Yule and H. Cordier (London 1903) ii 498. For the phraseology of the interpretation compare also the instructions issued by Genghis Khan to a subordinate dispatched in pursuit of enemies: 'If those, becoming winged, flying, ascend into heaven, shalt thou, Sübe'etei, becoming a gerfalcon, flying, not seize them? If, becoming marmots, digging with their nails, they enter into the earth, shalt thou, becoming an iron rod, boring, seeking them, not overtake them? If, becoming fishes, they enter into the Tenggis Sea, shalt thou, Sübe'etei, becoming a net which is cast or a net which is dragged, catching and taking them up, not take them?', *The secret history of the Mongols*, translated by F. W. Cleaves (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1982) i 133–4, 199. See also R. Merkelbach, *ZPE* xix (1975) 204–7, T. Karadagli, *Fabel u. Ainos: Studien zur griechischen Ainos* (Meisenheim/Glan 1981) 91–4.

<sup>8</sup> See Muraviev's *Journey to Khiva through the Turcoman country*, 1819–20, translated from the Russian (1824) by Philipp Strahl and from the German (1871) by Captain W. S. A. Lockhart (Calcutta 1871) 67 f. Nicolai Nicolaievich Muraviev (1794–1866) was a brother of the better known Decembrist, A. N. Muraviev; he rose to be Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus Corps. His experiences during his mission led him to press for a forward policy in that area. 'Those who have seen Asiatic troops assert that a few companies of regulars could rout these great masses of irregulars with ease. The only difficulty would be in getting at them, and in provisioning one's own force. The Turcoman horses are very fleet, and no broken cavalry horse could possibly keep up with them; besides the uniform of a European dragoon puts him at a great disadvantage to the active Turcoman in his easy dress' (p. 152). Had he been familiar with Hdt. iv, he might have attached more weight to these problems.

<sup>1</sup> See further F. Hartog, *Le miroir d'Hérodote* (Paris 1980) 67 f., 74–8.

<sup>2</sup> For a very brief discussion of this practice see I. J. Gelb, *A study of writing* (Chicago 1963) 5 f., D. Diringer, *The alphabet*<sup>3</sup> i (London 1968) 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Hermes* lxx (1935), 121–76 (= *Gesammelte Schriften* ii [Basel 1975], 817–79; partially reproduced in *Herodot: eine Auswahl aus der neueren Forschung*, ed. W. Marg (Darmstadt 1962) 455–70.

<sup>4</sup> More fully, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* N.S. xvii (1885) 415–82.

<sup>5</sup> The explanation in terms of a pre-arranged code sounds rather artificial. The symbolic appropriateness of chili and pepper is obvious enough, and indeed these items on their own seem almost sufficient for the purpose. Hens being timid creatures, I suspect that the chicken pieces are intended to convey a taunt.

assumption that the Russian gifts must embody a message though in fact the rather odd collocation of these heterogeneous items was a matter of chance.

Such symbolic communication is not restricted to official messages. In the nineteen-thirties Henning Haslund-Christensen, with more than a decade of varied Central Asian experience behind him, spent a brief but enjoyable holiday at an oasis in Sinkiang, on the edge of the Taklamakan desert, near the Tibetan border. On the day before his departure one of his servants brought him a present: 'The little bag's contents were most peculiar. It contained a small piece of charcoal, a withered flower, a hawk's feather and a walnut. I turned to the messenger in astonishment to ask him whence this curious present came, and he replied with a broad grin that the letter to the Sahib was from the girl from Nija. "Letter?" I asked in bewilderment, for there was really no letter, but the servant continued to smile as he pointed to the bag's contents. I . . . went to the sheik for an explanation. When the worthy man saw the contents of the bag, he laughed so much that his long white beard shook. . . . When at last he realized that I understood nothing, he laid his arm about my shoulder and said, pointing at the four objects one by one: "The message to you from the Nija girl is this: The flames of love consume me . . . if I had wings I would fly to thee . . . I give myself to thee."'<sup>9</sup>

The explanation of the dried flower, which Haslund-Christensen has modestly suppressed, emerges from the somewhat more elaborate *billet-doux* recorded by the archaeologist A. von Le Coq (though not he himself but his servant was the recipient).<sup>10</sup> In this case, the bag held ten items, intended to convey the following message: a lump of pressed tea, meaning 'I can drink tea no more'; a blade of straw, 'I become wan (for love of you)'; a red jujube fruit, 'I get red (when I think of you)'; a dried-out apricot, 'I become withered (like this fruit)'; a piece of charcoal, 'Burning with the flames of love I am become charcoal'; a dried flower, 'You are handsome'; a piece of sugar-candy, 'You are sweet'; a pebble, 'Is your heart made of stone?'; a falcon's feather, 'If I had wings, I would fly to you'; a walnut kernel, 'I give (myself) to you'. In many instances the symbolism seems obvious (at least, once it has been explained),<sup>11</sup> though it should be noted that the principle of selection is not altogether consistent; while most of the objects express the sender's mental or physical condition, one (the lump of tea) is to be understood negatively, and three (the dried flower, candy, and pebble) relate to the addressee.<sup>12</sup> Here the

recipient, who did not intend to accede to this proposal, suspected that it was the vehicle of a love-charm, and rejected his employer's suggestion that he might at least eat the candy, on the grounds that it would put him in the sender's power. This raises the question whether symbolic communications were widely supposed to have some magical force, but there seems to be no other indication that the objects comprising the message were felt to be intrinsically dangerous, and probably this is a special case.

This style of epistolography was not confined to Tartary. A century ago C. A. Gollmer, a missionary working in West Africa, recorded a message, received by the wife of a Yoruban taken captive in a raid, consisting of a stone, coal, pepper, corn, and a rag.<sup>13</sup> The stone represented health—'as the stone is hard, so my body is hardy and strong'; the coal represented his gloomy prospects, the pepper the heat of his mind on this account; the corn indicated leanness—'as the corn is dried up by parching, so my body is dried and become lean through the heat of my affliction and suffering'; and finally the rag stood for his worn-out clothes. It seems clear that the recipient was not expected to work this out without guidance; the tangible objects, a concrete representation of the message, gave authority to a verbal report (and no doubt served to reinforce the messenger's memory).

In general, this practice clearly adds a degree of formality to what is communicated. There may be doubt as to whether we have rightly heard what is said, or have taken too seriously what was intended only in jest, or have mistaken the glib courtesies of a subordinate for the solemn word of his superior. The material symbols remove such uncertainties, and may well serve to aid the memories of witnesses besides that of the messenger. To the literate the Turkestani love-letters and the Lu-tze declaration of war (chicken liver, chicken fat, chili and pepper), neither of which is thought to stand in need of verbal gloss, represent a system which seems either slightly comic or perilously open to misconstruction; but normally, to those familiar with the practice, the situational context will have made the purport of the message clear enough.<sup>14</sup>

The notion that the Scythian gifts were meant to test Persian canniness sounds like a Greek reaction; the preceding examples strongly suggest that the sense of this symbolic message was expected to be self-evident. It is, moreover, hard to believe that the Persians, themselves an all-but-illiterate people, were unused to this convention; indeed, their own customary demand for earth and water in token of submission reflects a similar

<sup>9</sup> H. Haslund-Christensen, *Mongolian journey* (translated by F. H. Lyon, London 1949), 206 f.; plate xi depicts the Nija girl. For biographical details see *Dansk Biografisk Leksikon* Bd. 6 (Copenhagen 1980) 63–5.

<sup>10</sup> *Volkskundliches aus Ost-Turkistan* (Berlin 1916) 4 f.

<sup>11</sup> The walnut, which concludes both messages, is puzzling: has its interpretation been bowdlerized?

<sup>12</sup> A rather sophisticated development of the conventions embodied in these two Turkestani communications may be seen in the Turkish love-letter described by Lady Mary Wortley Montague in her letter to Lady Rich (Pera, 16 March, O.S. 1717). This comprised a pearl, a clove, a jonquil, paper, a pear, soap, coal, a rose, straw, cloth, cinnamon, a match, gold thread, hair, a grape, gold wire, and pepper; the signification of each item is explained in a verse. 'You see this letter is all in verse, and I can assure you that there is as much fancy shewn in the choice of them, as in the most studied expressions of our letters; there being, I believe, a million of verses designed for this use. There is

no colour, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble, or feather, that has not a verse belonging to it; and you may quarrel, reproach, or send letters of passion, friendship, or civility, or even of news, without even inking your fingers.' We must wish that she had given further examples; it all sounds rather like the Victorian development of the language of flowers.

<sup>13</sup> 'On African symbolic messages', *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* xiv (1884) 169–82.

<sup>14</sup> For a nasty illustration of misplaced ingenuity in interpreting alien symbols see Charles Allen, *A mountain in Tibet* (London 1982) 163. (A mail-runner, carrying white envelopes edged in black and sealed with red sealing-wax, fell into the hands of villagers with an uneasy collective conscience; interpreting the white envelope as representing the white man, the black border as his soldiers, and the red seal as government anger, they took drastic preventative action.)

principle.<sup>15</sup> But of course the symbolism generally current among one group might be unintelligible to another, and there might be some loss of face in admitting to perplexity.

An alternative account of this episode is preserved by Clement of Alexandria, who cites as his authority Pherecydes of Syros (*Strom.* v 8.44, p. 355, 13 Stäh., *FGrH* 3 F 174):

ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐ μόνον Αἰγυπτίων οἱ λογικώτατοι, πρὸς δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων βαρβάρων ὅσοι φιλοσοφίας ὠρέχθησαν, τὸ συμβολικὸν εἶδος ἐξήλωσαν. φασὶ γοῦν καὶ Ἰδανθοῦραν τὸν Σκυθῶν βασιλέα, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Φερεκύδης ὁ Σύριος, Δαρείῳ διαβάντι τὸν Ἰστρον πόλεμον ἀπειλοῦντα πέμψαι σύμβολον ἀντὶ τῶν γραμμάτων μὺν βάτραχον ὄρνιθα διστὸν ἄροτρον. ἀπορίας δὲ οὐσῆς οἷα εἰκὸς ἐπὶ τούτοις Ὅροντοπάτας μὲν ὁ χιλιάρχος ἔλεγεν παραδῶσειν αὐτοὺς τὴν ἀρχήν, τεκμαιρόμενος ἀπὸ μὲν τοῦ μῦθου τὰ οἰκήσεις, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ βατράχου τὰ ὕδατα, τὸν ἄερα τε ἀπὸ τῆς ὄρνιθος καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ διστοῦ τὰ ὄπλα, ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ ἄρότρου τὴν χώραν. Ζηφόδρης δὲ ἔμπαλιν ἡρμήνευσεν. ἔφασκεν γάρ· ἐὰν μὴ ὡς ὄρνιθες ἀναπτῶμεν ἢ ὡς μύες κατὰ τῆς γῆς ἢ ὡς οἱ βάτραχοι καθ' ὕδατος δύωμεν, οὐκ ἂν φύγοιμεν τὰ ἐκείνων βέλη· τῆς γὰρ χώρας οὐκ ἔσμεν κύριοι.

Clement's source here is a notorious problem; I do not underestimate its importance, but the evidence at our disposal seems not to allow a satisfactory solution. Pherecydes ὁ Σύριος should be the theologian/philosopher (DK 7) credited in antiquity with the authorship of the first prose book, a reputation which he could hardly have achieved if he had mentioned an incident in the reign of Darius; nor does the subject-matter of this fragment fit what we know of his work. De Sanctis and Momigliano, who independently published important discussions of this fragment,<sup>16</sup> were content to suppose that Clement's source was really Pherecydes the Athenian genealogist; but even allowing for his interest in Miltiades (*FGrH* 3 F 2), it is hard, as Jacoby emphasized in his fundamental study,<sup>17</sup> to see how the episode could have been easily accommodated, if the surviving fragments give a fair picture of his work. This leaves Pherecydes of Leros, Jacoby's candidate, the titles of whose works (Περὶ Λέρου· περὶ Ἰφικερείας· περὶ τῶν Διονύσου ἑορτῶν· καὶ ἄλλα) suggest a Hellenistic date, despite the Suda's γωνῶς πρὸ ὀλίγου τῆς οὐδ' ὀλυμπιάδος (480/79); admittedly none of his titles

sounds very promising for our purpose, but no doubt καὶ ἄλλα might be regarded as infinitely accommodating.

To me Pherecydes the Athenian seems the least unattractive of these options; but the objections to this identification are too serious for it to serve as a satisfactory premise for further argument. However, Clement had certainly not himself consulted the vast range of authors whom he cites,<sup>18</sup> and there may be grounds for doubting his reliability here; it is perhaps significant that the cosmogony which secured for Pherecydes of Syros a place in literary history might itself very well be seen as an example of the subject he is discussing, τὸ συμβολικὸν εἶδος,<sup>19</sup> and I cannot wholly suppress the suspicion that Clement had found Pherecydes' cosmogony associated with the Scythian message in some earlier treatment of this topic, and was confused about the provenance of the latter. However, it would unduly complicate the following discussion if I expressed myself in terms wholly consistent with this agnostic position, and I shall continue to refer to Clement's story as Pherecydean, despite these doubts.

Whatever Clement's source, the discrepancies between his story and Herodotus' account strongly suggest that the former is (as Wilamowitz first observed)<sup>20</sup> independent of the latter. Apart from a slight variation in the orthography of the Scythian leader's name, there are three obvious differences from Herodotus: (1) instead of five arrows there is only one, but in addition there is a plough; the leading roles are played not by Darius and Gobryas but by the unfamiliar Orontopatas and Xiphodres; (3) the misinterpretation of the bird as symbolizing air is much more sensible than Darius' far-fetched guess that it represents horses. Moreover, though the point seems to have been ignored in previous discussions Δαρείῳ διαβάντι τὸν Ἰστρον appears to indicate an earlier point in the campaign.

De Sanctis and Momigliano attached great importance to Pherecydes' plough, arguing that this could not be a symbol of territoriality among nomads, and that the mouse was far more appropriate; the plough, in their view, represented an addition by Greeks habituated to agriculture, who found the mouse incomprehensible in this role. But if Pherecydes' plough looks like a secondary addition, so too does Herodotus' absurdly forced misinterpretation of the bird, and the two narratives, they concluded, must thus represent separate developments of the original tradition, a tradition which de Sanctis argued was in all likelihood a Greek invention because it presupposed that Darius was pursuing a plan for trans-Danubian conquest which must almost certainly be regarded as pure Greek speculation.<sup>21</sup> These conclusions won the approval of Jacoby, who evidently was inclined to view the incident

<sup>15</sup> The knotted cord left with the Ionians guarding the Danube bridge (iv 98) represents a related convention. Macan's very instructive note *ad loc.* concludes thus: 'That the Great King dealing with Ionian Greeks at the close of the sixth century had recourse to so simple a device . . . is hardly credible . . . The device is probably geographically true, i.e. it may have been employed by the Greek traders in their intercourse with the natives of the steppes, or by the natives among themselves'.

<sup>16</sup> G. de Sanctis, 'Il messaggio figurato degli Sciti a Dario', in *Memoria lui Vasile Parvan* (Bucharest 1934) 110–11, A. Momigliano, 'Per l'età di Ferecide Ateniese', *RFIC* N.S. x (1932) 346–51 (= *Terzo Contributo alla Storia degli Studi Classici* [Rome, 1966] 335–40).

<sup>17</sup> 'The first Athenian prose writer', *Mnemosyne* S.3 xiii (1947) 13–64 (esp. 52–5) (= *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. H. Bloch [Leiden 1956] 100–43). His view is evidently accepted by A. Uhl, who does not discuss this fragment in his monograph *Pherekydes von Athen* (Munich 1963); see also G. Huxley, *GRBS* xiv (1973) 137 n. 2.

<sup>18</sup> On his extensive use of anthologies see H. Chadwick, *RAC* ix 1144–5, s.v. 'Florilegium'.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. DK 7 A 9, B 6.

<sup>20</sup> *SPAW* 1926, 131 (= *Kleine Schriften* v 2 [Berlin 1971] 136) ('unabhängig und daher für die novellistische Überlieferung, die bei Herodot so breiten Raum einnimmt, sehr wertvoll').

<sup>21</sup> This last point is surely invalid; the Scythians, not being privy to Darius' intentions, might very reasonably conjecture that the Persians intended permanent settlement, at least if they met with no resistance.

as unhistorical: 'One might well call it a folk-tale,<sup>22</sup> and it is quite probable that the story is as old as the Scythian war itself, and that the tradition of it was at first purely oral.'

It seems to me that there is more to be said for Pherecydes' version than has generally been allowed, and that its differences from Herodotus' are largely explicable in terms of the latter's interests and preconceptions. Much hangs on the Pherecydean plough, and I do not think we should accept without demur its relegation to the status of a secondary addition. The Scythians might, for the most part, live by pastoral nomadism, but even Herodotus allows cultivation some part in their way of life and includes a plough among the mysterious golden objects which fell from heaven at the very beginning of their history (cf. iv 5.3; 17-18). We should certainly not take literally the impression of the terrain presented in Coes' warning to Darius (iv 97.3): ἐπὶ γῆν . . . μέλλεις στρατεῦσθαι τῆς οὔτε ἀρηρομένον φανήσεται οὐδὲν οὔτε πόλιν οἰκομένην. The economy of the vast and ill-defined area covered by Herodotus' Scythia for the most part evidently rested primarily on nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralism, and secondarily on tillage; such farming was itself often carried out on a shifting system, by which an area of ground would be broken up and cultivated for as long as it produced a reasonable return, and then abandoned.<sup>23</sup> Cultivation need not imply long-term settlement in a particular area. The Greek view of Scythia tended to over-emphasize pastoral nomadism because it was interestingly different, rather as we allow igloos undue prominence in our picture of Inuit life. *Campestres melius Scythae*: it seems to me much more likely that the plough was discarded because as a symbol of territoriality it did not square with Hellenic conceptions of Scythian life than that it was a secondary addition.

Certainly in the selection of intelligence-analysts the Pherecydean narrative looks like the earlier version. Unfamiliar characters with outlandish names have evident narratological disadvantages, the most obvious being the difficulty of remembering their names; it is not hard to see how Darius and Gobryas might come to replace Orontopatas and Xiphodres, while the reverse is improbable. Moreover, the king who proves less percipient than his pessimistic counsellor is all too typically Herodotean, and Darius' idiotic guess about the bird's significance enhances the contrast between the two figures.

The Pherecydean timing (if Clement's wording is to

be trusted) also seems more appropriate. The crossing of the Danube represents a critical point in Darius' advance; the passage of an obvious boundary by a force clearly too large to be treated as a casual raiding party is the moment for a protest at the violation of territorial integrity. In Herodotus the menacing challenge is postponed until Darius and his army have advanced for some weeks through the trackless waste, and the perplexing message contributes powerfully to our sense of imminent disaster and an incalculable foe; the advantage to the narrative is great, but we might wonder about the sense of this procedure from the Scythian point of view.

It may seem to some intrinsically improbable that Clement should have preserved a tradition antedating Herodotus. Yet the differences between the two versions of this episode seem to be almost entirely explicable in terms of Herodotus' interests, his feeling for convincing and memorable narrative, and his overschematic conception of the contrast between Persians and Scythians. I would not be taken to mean that Herodotus deliberately deviated from the 'facts' as he knew them. Whether in the first place his source was oral tradition or a book, he must in composing have relied very largely on a well-stocked mind rather than on neatly compiled notes, and memory, as we all know, is selective, tending to emphasize what suits our preconceptions and purposes, and discarding what does not.

Ethnographically, as we have seen, the story looks authentic, the earliest recorded example (so far as I can discover) of a custom deeply rooted in the conventions of illiterate and preliterate societies.<sup>24</sup> It might well be that Herodotus, as is often his way, has artificially contrived a historical context for an item of ethnographic interest.<sup>25</sup> Yet the Greek settlers and traders to whom Herodotus must owe his information about South Russia cannot often have had the opportunity to observe the formal declaration of hostilities (as opposed to casual raiding), and if there is any substance at all to Herodotus' account of Darius' trans-Danubian venture, this episode surely has a good claim to historicity.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> At this point a reference to Stith Thompson's *Motif index of folk literature* (Copenhagen 1955-8) might seem appropriate; but it does not yield anything closely comparable to Herodotus' story.

<sup>23</sup> See further R. E. F. Smith, *The origins of farming in South Russia* (Paris 1959) esp. 51-87.

<sup>24</sup> It is not chance that all the instances of symbolic communications discussed in this article come from the observations of foreigners; in general, the distinctive practices of oral societies are all too likely to pass away unrecorded. See further M. T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record* (London 1979) esp. 202-30.

<sup>25</sup> On this characteristic practice ('Umsetzen von gegenwärtigen Zuständen in historische Handlung') see D. Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (Berlin 1971) 136-40; cf. Macan on iv 98 (n. 15).

<sup>26</sup> I would like to thank Dr Paul Coones for guidance over some unfamiliar parts of the terrain traversed in this article.